

OPTIMISTIC VIEW AHEAD BY

PARK COLLEGE PRESIDENT

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BY NED M. TRIMBLE.
(A Member of The Star's Staff.)

IN the first few days after Dr. Robert Eli Long arrived on the Park college campus, the new college president was observed frequently tearing up interoffice notes and other papers that had reached his desk.

When questioned about this practice, Dr. Long would explain to his puzzled colleagues, with slight embarrassment, that it was a habit he picked up during his recent service as a State department emissary to Paris and earlier as an employee of the Central Intelligence agency in Washington.

No paper ever is thrown away within these agencies, he explained, and it becomes second nature to tear up all papers, even in one's unofficial life.

"I am getting over that habit pretty well," Dr. Long said recently, crumpling up a piece of paper and tossing it in the waste basket. "Although it still seems a little strange not to lock up my papers in a safe."

Diplomat With NATO.

But the 39-year-old college president would not like to give anyone the impression that his government duties were of the cloak and dagger variety, despite the secrecy required.

In Paris, where he and his family stayed a year, he was attached to the diplomatic mission to the NATO powers. This is a separate group and with different functions from the regular American embassy to the French government.

"I suppose you'd say we were the working crew behind the ambassador," Dr. Long said. "We prepared reports and papers and were called on to read and digest information and reports dealing with the other members of NATO."

The Paris suburb of Le Vésinet was home for Dr. and Mrs. Long, their four children, Jean, 17; Judy, 15; Jill, 12, and James Robert, 9, and their cat and dog. Dr. Long would commute to work each day in his American car. His office was a short walk from the Louvre museum where occasionally he would spend a few minutes in the lunch period.

"It was a wonderful experience for all of us," Long continued. "The children were born into the cosmopolitan atmosphere

Goal of Double Enrollment Is Not Too Great, Says Robert Eli Long, in Consider-

ation of Expansion Program and Larger Numbers of College Students Expected in a Few Years—Move From Paris to Parkville a Pleasant Experience for New Official and His Family.

of their schools and were coming along well with their French. We were looking forward to another year there, but the chance to come to Park seemed too promising to turn down."

Pleased by Welcome.

His family now comfortably settled in the White House, the president's home, and himself established in his office in McKay hall, Dr. Long gives the impression of being eminently suited to the president's chair.

One of his first official acts was to rearrange the offices near his in McKay hall. He quickly got acquainted with the faculty and staff, and his first weeks at the college have been crowded with speaking appearances.

"I've been impressed since my arrival by the friendliness of everyone and the warmth with which I have been received," he said. "You know this is my first connection with the Mid-West."

Dr. Long's goal for the college consists mainly in doubling the enrollment and raising admission and graduation standards.

"I would like Park to be a college that would earn the deepest pride of all its students and alumni, an institution that would offer an absolutely first class education," he explained.

"It has been said that there is nothing wrong with any small liberal arts college that a million dollars would not cure. This is not exactly true. We need better buildings, certainly—but we also need more and better faculty members and a better student body. We must constantly be raising our standards. We can-

not afford, for the sake of a higher enrollment, to take just anybody who presents himself as a student.

"I wouldn't want to try to remake Park in the image of an Ivy league or any other kind of college. We must build with

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NEW PRESIDENT of Park college—Dr. Robert Eli Long.

the Mid-West and of Greater Kansas City.

"This sounds like a big order, I know, to talk of doubling the enrollment. But it may not be as difficult as it sounds. An ex-

panding admissions program is well underway, and in a few years there will be larger numbers of students of college age.

"The trustees have started a construction and expansion program that will continue for several years, and they believe that fund raising for all this is going to be sufficient."

International Outlook.

Although he is the first Park president not to have been an ordained minister, Dr. Long was recommended by the Presbyterian board for Christian Education and is himself a Presbyterian. He has a solid New England academic back-

ground and an international out-
look that Long has transferred to Park college.

His interest in international affairs comes both from upbringing and education. He spent much of his childhood in China, and his major studies in college were in international relations.

Dr. Long was born in Buffalo, N. Y., where his father was a Y. M. C. A. general secretary. When he was two, the family moved to China where his father took up Y. M. C. A. duties in Peking. They lived later in Tientsin and Mukden.

The three Long boys and one girl attended school with children of other American and European expatriates, although their education in Mukden was handled largely by his mother through a correspondence course from the United States.

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When the family returned to this country in 1928, Bob entered in high school in Rockville Center, on Long Island. He entered Yale university in 1932, with every intention of joining the foreign service after college.

After his junior year, Bob Long was chosen as one of ten American college students to be the guests of the French line on the maiden voyage of the new Normandie from New York to France.

"They provided everything for the trip. It was a wonderful promotional scheme," we thought. Each of us was given 1,000 francs, which I can tell you was a good deal more than 1,000 francs nowadays."

A Use for the Money.

While his fellow travelers were spending their extra francs

in 1948, Long persuaded him to apply for service with the recently organized Central Intelligence agency.

"I got a leave of absence for a year and never returned," Dr. Long said. "I was with CIA until 1954 and served as assistant to both men who have been its directors: Walter Bedell Smith and Allen W. Dulles."

Dr. Long quit the intelligence agency last year and joined the State department, asking for a foreign assignment. He was assigned to be the number two man in his particular division of the diplomatic mission and moved his family to Paris.

Why would he give up an exciting and comfortable job in Paris to take on the responsibility of a small college?

"I have been interested in college administration for a number of years," he explained. "I thought this might be a fine opportunity. The more I learned about Park, the more interested I became and the more promising it appeared. Everything I have seen lives up to this expectation."

After his graduation, a Phi Beta Kappa, in 1936, Long enrolled for a graduate degree at Yale, and married the girl. He got his M. A. in 1938, but by then had given up any idea of a foreign service career. He stayed on at Yale, working on a doctorate in international relations, supporting himself by a job in the university library. In 1941, as he was completing his Ph. D. work, he received an appointment as an instructor at the University of Vermont.

After two years at Vermont and at the height of the war, Dr. Long began to wonder if there were something more useful he could do for the war effort. He got an appointment as an officer in the navy and began training for service in military government of the Pacific islands. He spent three years in the navy, including more than a year as part of the government of Saipan. He got out in 1945 as a lieutenant and returned to Vermont.



AT HOME IN PARKVILLE—Left to right are Jill Margaret Long, 12; Judith Alyn Long, 15; Mrs. Long, Dr. Long, and James Robert Long, 9. The eldest daughter, Jean Elinor Long, 17, is absent, a student at the University of Kansas. The cat, Bonne (Kansas City Star photographs).

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